

Rain

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

I won't complain about the rain. It takes a bit of imagination to farm without irrigation. The rain that's coming down will soak deep into the ground, and the humus will save it for later to give to our 'maters and 'taters. The summer crops are willing and able to take advantage of a full water table. That said, we are also grateful for a few dry days last week. By Thursday afternoon two fields were ready for rebreaking and I slowly ran the chisel plow and harrow through the ground. Earthworm dodged the steel, and quickly went back to work incorporating the compost I applied last week into the soil humus.

The crew was ready and chomping at the bit. By the time I made two furrows they were already dropping the seed potatoes. I asked everybody if they knew what a foot was, and almost got one in my rear. Although potatoes will grow 8 inches apart, or 16 inches apart, I like them one foot apart from each other. You only get one chance and it is amazing how many folks new to farming don't know what 12 inches is.

One person drops and the next person steps on the potato piece, tucking it firmly in the furrow. And down the rows we goes. I head for field number two, and before I finish plowing and making the furrows, 350 pounds of Red Pontiaas are planted.

It's a beautiful sight to see six friends marching up and down the field as I ride the farmall tractor. They were getting them in as fast as I could get the ground ready and get what they'd already planted covered up. By six thirty 900 pounds of Kennebecs were safely tucked in. One more field to go. But one pass through it brought disappointment. It was still too wet. When soil is worked when wet, clods and crusts form that give trouble later on. We decided we'd best wait to plant the last few hundred pounds.

It poured that night and we are still waiting. So it's back to a fencing job. Laying a slate rock patio, and other non-garden projects. Yes, I'm anxious to plow and plant, but let it rain. It's great to see the creeks full, spring sprouting, trees blooming and feel the farm full of water again. Drylandfish have been plentiful this wet spring. I find most of mine on the kitchen table, as Mark really has the eye for them, and the woodland enthusiasm it takes to find them; A wet spring has good points, like teaching me patience. Dry weather will be here soon, then we really won't complain about the rain.